

A New Henry III Long Cross Coin of Robert from the London mint.

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Within the Henry III long cross series there is a small group of four coins in class 5g, which have continued to pose one of the more intractable but interesting problems. This new coin has recently been acquired by the author of this note, bringing the number of known specimens to five.



The new coin is a metal detector find from the vicinity of Canterbury. It is quite heavily clipped resulting in a low weight of 0.85g. However, enough remains of the legends and other features to allow for a secure attribution. The obverse is a normal class 5g, the reverse reading is ROB/ERT/ONL/VND. The coin is an obverse and reverse die duplicate of the other four known specimens.

This small group of coins is interesting because there is no known surviving record of a Robert ever having been appointed as moneyer at the London mint. The coins were briefly discussed by Churchill and Thomas in their account of the Brussels Hoard.¹ They noted the characteristically narrow neck but also stated that in their opinion, the coins were genuine. Churchill took this further, discussing a number of possible candidates for the moneyer² but concluded that there is a strong case for believing that that no such person ever existed. He also noted some resemblance of these coins to other class 5g coins of Canterbury. The most plausible explanation is that we have a case of the die sinker starting out to produce a reverse die of Robert for the Canterbury mint but for whatever reason, finishing the die with the London mint signature.

Given the very small number of coins known, it is likely that the error was spotted before many coins found their way into circulation. The known examples exhibit some wear and tear, but in the case of the Ashmolean Museum's specimens, very little, if any.



The Ashmolean Museum No. 902.



The Ashmolean Museum No.901

¹ Churchill R. & Thomas R. 2012, The Brussels Hoard of 1908, BNS & Baldwin's (p79)

² Churchill R. 2012, Mints and Moneyers During the Reign of Henry III, Baldwin's (p85)

With the Churchill and Thomas coins below, there are some signs of both wear and clipping.



The late Ron Churchill coin.



The Bob Thomas coin

(All coins are illustrated with the permission of their owners)

The Ashmolean museum lists two examples, No. 901 and No. 902 in SCBI 12³. Both are listed as being part of the 1833 'old collection' so their original provenance is unclear. Of the two coins in private collections one, the Churchill specimen, has an L.A. Lawrence provenance and the other, the Thomas coin, has a Col. Morrieson provenance. Both these coins were mentioned in Lawrence's article in the BNJ Vol IX⁴. The fact that all of the extant coins exhibit at least some wear and clipping would tend to suggest that some at least did get into circulation and consequently, it is possible further examples may turn up.

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³ Metcalf, D.M. 1969, English Coins 1066-1279, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford II, SCBI 12, OUP/Spink & Son

⁴ Lawrence, L.A. 1912, The Long-Cross Coinage of Henry III and Edward I, BNJ First Series IX